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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3135  
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SUBJECT: NICARAGUA FORMALIZES RECOGNITION OF SOUTH OSSETIA  
AND ABKHAZIA

REF: MANAGUA 1124

¶1. (U) On September 5, the Ortega Administration issued Decrees 46 and 47, extending full diplomatic recognition to its "sisters," the Republic of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The decrees recognize the independence of the two "republics," welcomes them into the "community of independent nations of the world," and directs the Foreign Ministry to take all necessary steps to consummate the recognition by establishing "full diplomatic relations." The Decrees were signed by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and Acting Foreign Minister Manuel Coronel Kautz. Copies of the decrees have been sent to STATE/WHA.

¶2. (U) Nicaragua media reported that on September 4, Russian Ambassador Igor Kondrashev met with the Chair of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, Jamileth Bonilla, to discuss the situation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Kondrashev "welcomed" the decision of Ortega to recognize the "two regions." Bonilla, a former opposition leader who now claims to be independent but tends to vote with the Ortega government, noted her opposition to Ortega but "applauded" the decision to recognizing, noting that it would "contribute to peace." Nicaraguan radio is reporting that other Latin American nations are praising Ortega's "leadership" on recognition and that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuba's Raul Castro have called Ortega to congratulate his move.

¶3. (U) Opposition leaders have begun to criticize Ortega's decision. Constitutional Liberal Party (PLC) spokesman Leonel Teller issued a press release lamenting the decision and Ortega's "continued alienation" of Nicaragua from countries that can help and establishment of alliances with countries from whom Nicaragua has "nothing to gain, ... such as these countries protected by Russia." National Assembly Deputy and Chair of the Defense Committee, Enrique Quinonez commented that Ortega rushed to recognize because "he wants to be world leader and is looking to start another Cold War."

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